

LAND USE SERVICES DEPARTMENT

BUILDING AND SAFETY DIVISION

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COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO
PUBLIC AND SUPPORT
SERVICES GROUP

JULIE RYNERSON ROCK
Director

January 9, 2008

GRASS VALLEY AND SLIDE FIRE REBUILDING INFORMATION

Dear Homeowner:

One of the conditions that increased damage to homes during the Slide and Grass Valley fires was the proximity of homes to each other. Many of the damaged homes were constructed years ago on lots that are smaller than would be permitted under today's more stringent fire safety standards. For example, in 1989 the Board of Supervisors approved increasing the distance between homes by requiring the side yard setbacks to be 20% of the width of the lot.

As each of you plan to rebuild your homes, we hope you will include as many of the new fire safe construction standards as possible. Including these newer construction standards will not only make your home more resistant to future fires, it will give our firefighters the defensible space they need to successfully protect your home.

Put simply, our goal is to make the mountain communities safer as homes are rebuilt. We also realize that meeting these new standards – particularly the setback requirements – may not be possible for all properties.

In order to assist you in planning the reconstruction of your home, we have developed four guidelines that we hope will meet the needs of the majority of properties. These guidelines can be divided into two general categories – properties where a new home will be constructed on the existing foundation and properties where the existing foundation will be removed. Each of these is outlined in more detail below.

Whichever option you decide is best for you – before beginning design work for your new home, you should prepare a simple plot plan showing the location of property lines and the proposed location of the new home in relation to the location of the previous home; and bring that information to the building department. This will insure that you know what options are available to you, before incurring costs for design work.

Reconstruction on Existing Foundation

It is extremely important to note that while rebuilding a new home on the existing foundation may be attractive, it may not be possible in all cases. The extreme heat from these fires may have damaged the structural stability of the concrete. For this reason, the condition of the existing foundation must be certified before it can be reused. If the foundation can be certified and you wish to reuse it, the following two options are available:

MARK H. UFFER
County Administrative Officer

NORMAN A. KANOLD
Assistant County Administrator
Public and Support
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Board of Supervisors			
BRAD MITZELFELT	First District	DENNIS HANSBERGER	Third District
PAUL BIANE	Second District	GARY C. OVITT	Fourth District
JOSIE GONZALES	Fifth District		

Option 1: If the replacement home will be the same size and footprint as the home that was destroyed, it will be allowed regardless of current setback requirements.

Option 2: If the replacement home will be larger than the home that was destroyed, current setback requirements must be met. This may require altering the foundation layout.

Reconstruction on a New Foundation

It is extremely important to note that if the foundation is to be removed and you plan to use Option 4, a pre-alteration inspection must be made before the foundation is removed. If the foundation is removed without a pre-alteration inspection, other verifiable evidence of the homes previous location will need to be provided. Pre-alteration inspections will be made at no cost to you by the Division of Building and Safety. To request a pre-alteration inspection, call the Building & Safety Twin Peaks Office at (909) 336-0640. The pre-alteration inspection will verify and document the location of the existing foundation.

Option 3: If the replacement home will be the same size and footprint as the home that was destroyed and it is not physically possible to meet the new setback requirements, the home will be allowed to be replaced in its original location even if it does not meet the new setback requirements; except that all parts of the building must be at least 5-feet from the side property line. Eaves may project a maximum of 2' into the required 5' side yard provided they are boxed in and protected with 1 hr. fire resistive materials such as 5/8" Type "X" drywall, 7/8" stucco or equivalent.

Option 4: If the replacement home will be larger than the home that was destroyed, current setback requirements must be met.

My staff and I are committed to making the rebuilding process as fast and as smooth as possible. We're here to help.



David L. Wallace, Regional Building Inspector Supervisor
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